

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
AID-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 ACDA-07 /098 W  
-----191455Z 008267 /46

O R 191422Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2785  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: RHODEISA: FOREIGN SECRETARY'S STATEMENT  
TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS GIVEN US THE ADVANCE TEXT OF  
FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN'S STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS APRIL 19 ON HIS RECENT TRIP TO AFRICA.

2. BEGIN TEXT: WITH YOUR PERMISSION, MR. SPEAKER, AND  
THAT OF THE HOUSE, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON  
MY RECENT TOUR OF EIGHT COUNTRIES IN AFRICA. MY MAIN  
PURPOSE WAS TO SEE WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RE-

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START PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE  
RHODESIAN PROBLEM. AS THE HOUSE KNOWS, VIOLENCE HAS  
BEEN INCREASING, AND WHILE A LONG AND BLOODY STRUGGLE  
MIGHT IN THE END PRODUCE AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE (IF  
THAT IS THAT NAME THE STATE ITSELF CHOOSES) IT WILL DO  
SO ONLY AT GRAVE COST. MANY LIVES WILL BE LOST, THE  
ECONOMY WILL BE DESTROYED, THERE WILL BE SEVERE DAMAGE

TO THE STABILITY OF THE NEIGHBORING STATES AND IT WILL  
LEAVE A LEGACY OF LASTING BITTERNESS BETWEEN THE RACES.  
WE ARE ALL WELL AWARE OF THE IMMENSE DIFFICULTIES OF RE-  
SOLVING THIS PROBLEM.

I WAS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEMPT A NEW APPROACH BY THE  
SUPPORT OF THE US GOVERNMENT, WITH WHICH THERE HAS BEEN  
THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE COOPERATION. IT IS OUR JOINT DE-  
TERMINATION TO WORK FOR RECONCILIATION IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA ON THE FIRM BASIS OF MAJORITY RULE, THE  
FULLEST REGARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE ENDING OF  
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

THE STARTING POINT FOR THE PRESENT INITIATIVE GOES  
BACK TO THE STATEMENT OF MY RT. HON. FRIEND THE PRIME  
MINISTER ON 22 MARCH 1976 AND THE CRUCIAL ACHIEVEMENT  
OF DR. KISSINGER WHO LAST SEPTEMBER PERSUADED MR. SMITH  
TO ACCEPT THAT MAJORITY RULE WITHIN TWO YEARS WAS AT  
THAT TIME AN ATTAINABLE IDEAL. IT IS TRUE THAT MR.  
SMITH'S SPEECH MENTIONED OTHER CONDITIONS WHICH WERE  
NOT SUBSEQUENTLY REALIZED, BUT I BELIEVED THAT HIS  
STATEMENTS THEN AND SINCE SUGGESTED THAT HE MIGHT BE  
PERSUADED TO ACCEPT THE AGREED OBJECTIVE OF MAJORITY  
RULE IN 1978.

THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS STALLED, NOT OVER MAJORITY  
RULE THOUGH THERE WERE DOUBTS AS TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH  
THIS HAS BEEN AGREED BY THE RHODESIAN FRONT, BUT ON THE  
POWERS AND COMPOSITION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WHICH  
WAS TO DRAW UP THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION.

IN FEBRUARY ON MY VISIT TO WASHINGTON WITH THE  
PRIME MINISTER I SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD WORK JOINTLY  
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ON A STRATEGY TO PROMOTE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MA-  
JORITY RULE AND THIS THEY READILY AGREED TO DO. ON MY  
VISIT TO AFRICA I WAS ABLE TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES COSPONSORING  
A CONFERENCE TO DEVELOP A CLEAR TIMETABLE FOR ACHIEVING  
MAJORITY RULE IN 1978. SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD DRAW UP  
A CONSTITUTION PROTECTING BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEFINE  
AN ACCEPTABLE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS FOR AN AUTOMATIC TRANS-  
FER TO AN INDEPENDENT NATION. IT WOULD ALSO DISCUSS THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT  
FUND TO HELP PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC STABILITY OF AN  
INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE AND ENCOURAGE THE MINORITY WHITE  
POPULATION TO STAY AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE  
THE CONSTITUTION WOULD AIM TO BE BROADLY ACCEPTABLE TO  
OVER 6 MILLION PEOPLE, BLACK AND WHITE, WHO WOULD AC-  
TUALLY LIVE UNDER ITS PROVISIONS; BUT, AS CHAIRMAN OF  
THE CONFERENCE, I WOULD RETAIN THE FINAL RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR BRINGING ANY CONSTITUTIONAL BILL TO THIS HOUSE FOR  
ITS APPROVAL. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS OF

JANUARY FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT REMAIN OPEN FOR DISCUSSION. IT MAY BE THAT THERE IS MORE LIKELY TO BE AGREEMENT TO A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD BE RE-

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
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SPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS PRIOR TO THE  
GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE.  
IF MR. SMITH'S ADMINISTRATION DID NOT ACCEPT THE  
CONSTITUTION AND THE ARRANGEMENTS LEADING UP TO IT, NO  
IMMEDIATE PROGRESS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, SANCTIONS WOULD  
CONTINUE AND SO WOULD THE WAR, BUT I SUSPECT, AT AN  
INCREASED TEMPO. IF THERE WAS AGREEMENT, MR. SMITH'S  
ADMINISTRATION WOULD RESIGN, THE CARETAKER GOVERNMENT  
WOULD SUPERVISE THE ELECTIONS AND ANYONE PARTICIPATING  
IN THE ELECTION WOULD HAVE TO FORESAKE VIOLENCE; SANCTIONS  
WOULD ALSO BE LIFTED. I AM CONVINCED THE MAJORITY

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OF AFRICANS WHO CURRENTLY BELIEVE THAT THE ARMED STRUGGLE IS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD ARE ESSENTIALLY MEN OF PEACE. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVES OF THOSE WHO FEEL THEY HAVE NO RE COURSE BUT TO ARMS. MUCH AS WE ALL WISH VIOLENCE TO STOP WE CANNOT IMMEDIATELY EXPECT IT TO STOP WHILE THE WALL OF SKEPTICISM AND DIS-BELIEF (WHICH I MET ALL OVER AFRICA) REMAINS ABOUT THE INTENTIONS OF THE SMITH ADMINISTRATION. UNTIL THOSE WHO CURRENTLY CARRY ARMS ARE TOTALLY CONVINCED THAT THEY WILL HAVE MAJORITY RULE, I REGRET THAT IT LOOKS INEVITABLE THAT VIOLENCE WILL CONTINUE. THE REACTIONS TO THIS STRATEGY HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY ENCOURAGING FOR ME TO FEEL IT RIGHT, IN CLOSE CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION WITH THE US GOVERNMENT, TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VARIOUS PARTIES. I HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION FAIRLY SOON TO INFORM THE HOUSE WHETHER WE AND THE AMERICANS FEEL IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO COSPONSOR A CONFERENCE. MY VISIT TO AFRICA LASTED ONLY EIGHT DAYS. BUT I AM CONVINCED EVEN MORE THAN BEFORE I LEFT OF THE URGENT NEED TO END THE WAR IN RHODESIA. GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF THE CONTINUED CONFRONTATION WAS CLEARLY EXPRESSED TO ME BY THE FIVE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS, BY MR. VORSTER AND BY THE RHODESIAN LEADERS, BLACK AND WHITE. I DID NOT FIND AN ATMOSPHERE OF RACIAL HOSTILITY, ON THE CONTRARY A WIDESPREAD BELIEF IN THE NECESSITY FOR A NON-RACIAL MAJORITY GOVERNMENT. THERE IS HOWEVER A DESPERATE LACK OF TRUST WHICH MUST BE REBUILT. LET NO ONE BE UNDER ANY ILLUSION. THE WAY AHEAD IS FRAUGHT WITH DIFFICULTIES WHICH CAN HARDLY BE UNDER-ESTIMATED. THERE WILL BE SETBACKS. BUT SO LONG AS THERE IS A CHANCE OF SUCCESS, AS I BELIEVE THERE IS, WE SHOULD ALL OF US, INSIDE RHODESIA IN PARTICULAR, BUT OUTSIDE AS WELL, MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ACHIEVE AN IN-DEPENDENT, STABLE, NON-RACIAL MAJORITY GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE. END TEXT

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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